

## A few recommendations in the practice of genealogy:

Copied from [http://gramps-project.org/wiki/index.php?title=Genealogy\\_basics](http://gramps-project.org/wiki/index.php?title=Genealogy_basics)

- **Get the source.** No matter how much information you some day obtain regarding your family tree, it will only be as good as the [sources](#) it came from. Spend the extra effort at the time of discovery to write down all the details.
- **Research from what you know to what you do not.** Record everything that is known before making conjecture. The facts at hand can suggest direction for more research. Don't waste time looking through thousands of records hoping for a trail when you have other unexplored options.
- **Be descriptive.** Don't limit your record to names, dates and places. Genealogy is not just a study or analysis of what happened, but why it did and how the descendants might have been shaped by the events they went through. Plus, a charming narrative here and there goes a long way to making your family as interesting to others as it is to you.
- **Be as accurate as you can.** Don't make assumptions when recording primary information. Write it exactly as you see it, and then use bracketed comments to indicate your insertions, deletions or side comments. Use of the Latin "[sic]" is standard to confirm the accurate transcription of an apparent error. You may find afterwards that what you thought was an abbreviation or misspelling was actually a handwriting variation common to the period or a distinction in two facts with similar spellings.
- **Get everyone.** Record all the individuals you find at an event. Families often lived, worked, and worshipped together, so the relatives of an individual can show up at events of siblings, neighbors, and local churches.
- **Plan your efforts.** Knowing what you are looking to accomplish saves valuable time. Special trips to see original documents, burial places, libraries, or to interview individuals can not be repeated. Make sure you get everything you come for and record as much as you can while you have the chance. It is unfortunate to return from a trip to find that you omitted an obvious piece of information that passed right under your nose.
- **Look closely.** Sometimes re-interpretation of a group of seemingly unconnected pieces of information suddenly reveal a colorful period in the line you never expected. Abrupt changes in a family, such as what happens at a move, immigration, a marriage, death, or birth can point the direction for more research.
- **Qualify what you record.** Include your theories or questions about information as you write it. There's nothing wrong with others understanding that you might not be comfortable in the accuracy of a certain fact or hypothesis. It can help others to understand your perspective and bring further information to bear as they try to make sense of questions or research in the same area. Be sure to use brackets or other notation technique to clearly distinguish your comments from those of the source.
- **Respect the privacy of the living.** Genealogy is not intended to invade people's privacy by revealing their current health conditions, their social security numbers, and other still-hidden secrets. Be sensitive when writing about issues that some family members might not be comfortable discussing.

- **Back up your electronic information frequently.** If you spend countless hours entering information into a genealogy program, take the extra five minutes every now and then to back up the files on a CD. Label the disc with a description and date using a CD marker (not just any permanent marker!) and store it in a dark, cool and dry place.
- **Take lots of pictures.** Use photographs to remember details you don't have time to write down. Pictures of a cemetery stone can be useful, but you may also want a picture of the church that sits in front, a view from the road leading up to the site, views looking toward the stone from various positions, stones adjacent and otherwise interesting, a general overview of the place, even those who accompanied you on the visit. Later, these may help you find it and other areas for more research or simply remind you and others of the experience of that day.